

Lent 1 – Help Desk *by Julie Martin Burruss*

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Matthew 4:1-11

Characters:

Jesus

Helper

Adam

Eve

(see notes at the end of the script for prop information)

Center stage is a desk with a phone, a file folder, pen, and a sign that says Help Desk. Helper enters, sits, straightens desk accessories, opens the file folder, then displays a sign that says “The Helper is IN.”

Jesus enters, looking like it’s day 39 of 40 days in the desert. He is tired and hungry, but peaceful. He sits downstage and to the side of the desk, closes his eyes and sits quietly.

Helper opens a folder, looks at its contents, picks up the phone and dials.

A cell phone rings. It gets louder and louder. Finally, Jesus lifts his head, opens his eyes, and reaches in his pocket. He answers.

Jesus: (wearily) Jesus here.

Helper: Jesus! How have you been!

Jesus: You again?

Helper: Just checking in to see how things are going.

Jesus: We just talked yesterday. I’m fine. I’m still fine. Thanks for asking. Now if you don’t mind, I’m busy.

Helper: Are you sure you’re fine? You sound a little down to me.

Jesus: I’m just tired. And I haven’t had breakfast yet.

Helper: You still haven’t eaten, have you? Come on! I offered to send out a basket of muffins yesterday. Let me do that for you. I can have it there in no time.
(*Snapping his fingers at imaginary assistant offstage*)

Jesus: That’s okay. Really. I’m fine.

Helper: I insist. It’s what I’m here for...

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Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus: No *I* insist. Just leave me alone, please.

Helper: You get cranky when you haven't eaten. Come on, admit it. . .you're tempted, aren't you?

Jesus: (*annoyed*) Look, is there something I can do for you?

Helper: On the contrary, it's *I* who can do for *you*. Just name it. I'll give you whatever you need.

(*focus shifts to Adam and Eve, entering from opposite side, bickering. Adam is fumbling around with a cell phone, randomly pushing buttons with no success.*)

Eve: You need to push "Send" (*reaching for the phone*).

Adam: (*recoiling*) Leave me alone. I can figure it out myself.

Eve: Apparently not, or you wouldn't be calling for help.

Adam: I'm not calling for help, I'm calling for *confirmation*.

Eve: You're calling because you don't believe me. Or trust me.

Adam: I didn't say that.

Eve: At least put it on speakerphone so I can hear too.

Adam: There is no speakerphone.

Eve: (*pointing to the phone*) It says right on it, SPEAKERPHONE!

Adam: Shhhhhhh! It's ringing...

(*Adam holds phone to his ear. They freeze, focus shifts to Jesus*)

Jesus: For the last time, I'm not signing your contract.

Helper: It's really in your best interest, you know it is.

Jesus: I would appreciate it if you'd add me to your Do Not Call List.

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Matthew 4:1-11

Helper: I'll wait until you've had breakfast, then we'll talk.

Jesus: No, we ...

Helper: (*interrupting...*) Can you hold on a minute? I have another call. (*pushes a button on phone*) Good morning, Help Desk!

Jesus: (*looking down at phone*) You put me on hold?

(*Jesus sits with phone, bored, as though listening to Musak. Focus shifts to Adam and Eve*)

Adam: Yes, my name is Adam. I'm calling to ask about something you told my wife. She talked to you yesterday.

Helper: And your wife's name?

Adam: Eve.

Helper: Oh yes, Eve, lovely woman. You're a lucky man.

Eve: (*struggling to hear*) What's he saying?

Adam: He said talking to you made him consider a career change.

Eve: (*smacking him*) He did not!

Helper: So what can I do for you? Adam, was it?

Adam: Yeah. I just want to confirm what you said about our tree.

Helper: The big fruit tree in your back yard?

Adam: Yeah, that's the one. So, the fruit on it... My wife here tells me that if we eat it, we'll become immortal?

Helper: Hmm... that's not *quite* what I said.

Adam: (*to Eve, smacking her*) I TOLD you...

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Matthew 4:1-11

Helper: What I mean, is I didn't use the word "immortal" exactly. I did tell her that if you eat it you would become God-like. Which, I guess is the same thing. So yeah, I guess I did say that.

Eve: (*overhearing*) I told YOU!

Adam: Okay then. I was just checking. It sounded a little too good to true. And you know what they say... "if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

Helper: I hear that all the time. Anything else I can help you with today?

Adam: No, that's it. Thanks. Bye.

(*Adam and Eve start to exit*)

Eve: Maybe if you ate more fruit, you'd know how to work that phone...

(*Adam exits quickly ahead of her. Helper pushes another button on phone. Focus to Jesus*)

Helper: (*to Jesus*) Thank you for holding. Now then, where were we?

Jesus: (*fed up*) We were nowhere. For the last time, I'm not interested in your services. I have a partner I'm very happy with and loyal to, so leave me alone! (*He hangs up and exits*)

Helper: (*hanging up phone*) Well then. (*pauses, then talks as he scribbles on paper*) Call again in two weeks.

(*he closes file, looks at watch, pulls up "Helper is in" sign and exits*)

Props:

It is crucial to this skit that Jesus has a working cell phone that will ring on cue. For appearance's sake, the Helper should be calling from a desk phone; but it's fine for the Helper to also use a cell phone. In that case, the Helper should actually place the call to Jesus' phone.

*If the Helper cannot place the call, then someone needs to call to Jesus on cue. **Rehearse this sequence** so you know how long it takes for the phone to ring, how long it can ring before going to voice mail, and how loud the ring tone needs to be.*

The more unconventional the ring tone on Jesus' phone, the better. (Ask a teenager...)

Lent 2 – Commute by Julie Martin Burruss

Genesis 12:1-4a

John 3:1-17

Characters:

Abe

Nick

Two men enter from opposite sides of the stage and sit next to each other. Abe is dressed nicely, with some sort of ethnic accessory, (a headdress or prayer shawl, etc.). Nick is covered with conference swag (baseball cap, button, t-shirt, tote bag, portfolio, etc.) that says “Water and Spirit ’08.”

Abe: (to Nick) Excuse me.

Nick: (exhausted) Hmm?

Abe: Excuse me, is this the outbound train?

Nick: Oh yeah... this is outbound.

Abe: Okay, thank you. I’m still trying to find my way around town.

Nick: No problem. (glancing at Abe’s apparel) You don’t look like you’re from around here.

Abe: Nope, just got to town last week. I guess that makes me an immigrant. My name is Abe.

Nick: (visibly uncomfortable, scoots away from Abe slightly) Nick. And why did you come? To this city I mean? If you don’t mind me asking.

Abe: Oh yeah... job transfer. Got a call from the big boss saying he needed me to relocate. Still not sure about where it’s all going, but it’s supposed to be a good career move. Lots of opportunity for advancement, all that stuff.

Nick: That’s great. And bold of you, to just pick up and go like that.

Abe: Well, I trust my boss. He’s been in the business for a lot longer than I have, and I know he’ll put me where I’m supposed to be.

Nick: That’s great. A lot of people don’t trust their bosses like that. Lots of corporate corruption in the news, you know.

Abe: I know. It’s crazy.

Lent 2 – Commute by Julie Martin Burruss

Genesis 12:1-4a

John 3:1-17

(pause, as though the nice small talk between strangers has ended. Both stare straight ahead.)

Abe: So, you look like you've had quite a day.

Nick: Oh this? *(pointing to swag)* Yeah, I was at a conference all day. Water and Spirit 08.

Abe: *(smiling)* Yeah, I see that. How was it?

Nick: *(finally relaxing a little)* You know... I'm not sure.

Abe: You're not sure how it was?

Nick: No. . . I mean, the speakers were good, and they all seemed to know what they were talking about. And the buffet was spectacular...

Abe: That's always a plus.

Nick: Exactly. But, the conference as a whole. I'm just... I don't know. I'm not sure I get it.

Abe: The Water and Spirit part?

Nick: *(more relaxed, turns to face Abe)* Yeah. You know, I like a conference where I come away with something concrete I can do, things that I can take back to the office and put into action. And they kept talking about all these vague concepts. *(he pulls out a pamphlet and reads)* Get this... "the wind blows where it chooses, you don't know where it comes from or where it goes". Come on...what am I supposed to do with that?

Abe: That's tough.

Nick: When I get back to work and my boss asks me to present a "Lunch and Learn" to share what I learned at this conference, which, he will, you know, what am I supposed to say? I can see it now. A single slide that says "If you can't believe what you see, how can you believe what you can't see?" Yeah, that'll go over really well.

Abe: Maybe it's one of those things where... you just need to sit and think about it for awhile, and then it will make sense.

Lent 2 – Commute by Julie Martin Burruss

Genesis 12:1-4a

John 3:1-17

Nick: Yeah, I hope so. If not there's always next week.

Abe: What's next week?

(Nick pulls out a pamphlet, hands it to Abe)

Abe: "Born from Above 08?"

Nick: Part two.

Abe: *(Looking aside, hopefully)* Is this is my stop?...

Nick: I get a discount if I bring a friend...

Abe: It was nice meeting you... *(exits quickly)*

Nick: *(following him offstage)* Come on, you know you want to go!

Lent 3 – Coffee Break by Julie Martin Burruss

Exodus 17:1-7

John 4:5-42

Characters:

Worker 1

Worker 2

Worker 3

Tara (the Samaritan woman)

Boss

Center stage is a coffee maker, holding about 2 cups of coffee. Worker 1 stands there holding a bagel and a cup of coffee.

W2: *(enters, pours herself a cup of coffee)* Good morning.

W1: *(gesturing offstage)* There are bagels in the break room.

W2: Great, I skipped breakfast. How come we have bagels?

W1: Big shareholder meeting this morning. It's still going on actually.

W2: Wow, this is the first one for the new boss, right?

W1: Yeah. Baptism by fire I guess.

W2: Poor guy. I really like him a lot. I hope they don't crucify him out there.

W1: Me too. That's an angry group, though. They're always angry.

W3: *(enters carrying a cup, pours some coffee)* Who's always angry?

W1: The shareholders.

W3: Ah, yes.

W2 There are bagels in the break room.

W3: Is there cream cheese?

W1: I think so, let me go check... *(exits)*

W3: Have you heard anything from the inside?

Lent 3 – Coffee Break by Julie Martin Burruss

Exodus 17:1-7

John 4:5-42

- W2:** No, not yet. I thought I heard one of those big communal groans, though.
- W3:** That's not a good sign.
- W1:** (*re-enters, still holding a bagel*) What's not a good sign?
- W2:** A 250-shareholder-in-unison groan.
- W1:** Nope, not a good sign. By the way, there *is* cream cheese, but there's only plain stuff left.
- W3:** Great, it's probably that fat-free stuff too, isn't it? (*W1 shrugs*)
- W2:** I'm going to go see if I can hear anything outside the auditorium. (*exits*)
- W1:** I just don't understand those people.
- W3:** What do you mean?
- W1:** This guy has lifted this company out of the depths and back into the open.
- W3:** I hear you.
- W1:** Why do they challenge him and doubt his wisdom? I mean, he's the one who can *save us*.
- W3:** I know it!
- W2:** (*rushes back in*) It's over! You'll never believe what happened...
- W3:** What happened?
- W2:** I just caught the end, but it sounds like the boss was able to reason with everyone and get the 2009 plan approved.
- W1:** That man could get water out of a rock if he tried.
- W3:** That must be true, to get that crowd to stop whining.

Lent 3 – Coffee Break by Julie Martin Burruss

Exodus 17:1-7

John 4:5-42

W2: I think he finally convinced them all that we are all one team with the same goal, and we need to work together and respect each other in order to get there.

W3: That's the way we all work around here. Why can't they work that way as well?

W1: That's right.

(Tara enters with an empty coffee cup, eyeing the now empty coffee maker)

Tara: Hi! Is there any coffee left?

(they all eye her suspiciously, suddenly acting very cold)

W2: Not much, I'm afraid.

Tara: I'm happy to make a new pot, if someone will show me where we keep everything.

W1: Actually, I think we're out of coffee completely.

Tara: Well, that's odd. *(spying W1's bagel)* Are there leftover bagels somewhere?

(W2 and 3 eye W1 harshly...)

W1: *(with mouth half full)* Uh, I brought this from home.

(pause, they all look at Tara)

Tara: Oh, sorry. *(she leaves)*

W3: Can you believe her?

W2: It's only her 2nd week here and she's acting like she owns the place.

W1: I heard she's been divorced five times.

W3: I thought she was living with her boyfriend.

W1: That must be number six.

Lent 3 – Coffee Break by Julie Martin Burruss

Exodus 17:1-7

John 4:5-42

W2: Maybe she'll quit. She doesn't look happy here. I wonder why?

(In unison, they all take a sip of coffee. . .)

W3: Well, back to work.

W2: I guess so.

W1: Let's go wait for the e-mail with the official results of the meeting.

W2: Maybe we'll get bonuses!

(they all leave)

Tara: *(enters, carrying a cardboard cup holder with 3 or 4 to-go cups of coffee, looks around, then sets them down next to the coffee maker.)* Someone will appreciate these, I suppose.

Boss: *(enters)* Good morning, Tara.

Tara: Good morning sir!

Boss: Is that coffee you have there?

Tara: Yes, I got some at the café across the street. Apparently we're all out here.

Boss: That's odd. May I have one of those?

Tara: It would be my pleasure...

(she hands him one and they both leave)

Lent 4 – Human Resources by Julie Martin Burruss

I Sam 16:1-13

John 9: 1-41

Characters:

HR Mgr

Sam

Colleague 1

Colleague 2

Center stage is a desk, HR sits, working. Sam knocks, then enters.

Sam: Hey good morning... is this a good time?

HR: Yeah, I have a few minutes. What's up?

Sam: I just wanted to let you know that I hired a new assistant.

HR: You did? I didn't realize you brought someone in to interview.

Sam: I didn't, I made the offer over the phone.

HR: Well. . . you know that's not how we usually do it.

Sam: I know, I know.

HR: Usually there's a reference check, and a preliminary interview, then a management interview.

Sam: I know, but I saw the resume and I just had a feeling. I knew I'd be able to tell if this was the right person for the job. And I could.

HR: Did you talk to anyone else?

Sam: I talked to a couple others, but they weren't right.

HR: You just knew...

Sam: Yeah. I could tell. Can't explain how really. Just a feeling, I guess.

HR: Wow. *(pause)* Okay then. I trust you. Just get me the paperwork and let me know the start date.

Lent 4 – Human Resources by Julie Martin Burruss

I Sam 16:1-13

John 9: 1-41

Sam: Okay, thanks. (*exits*)

(*HR goes back to work, barely takes a sip of coffee. C1 knocks*)

C1: Hey, got a minute?

HR: Actually, I...

C1: (*making himself at home*) Good, because I just heard Sam got himself a new assistant...he's never met.

HR: So I hear.

C1: Is that even allowed?

HR: He says he made a good choice.

C1: But what do you think about that?

HR: I think it's fine. I trust him.

C1: Well, personally, I doubt it's going to work out. I like Sam, but where does he get off suddenly having this power to judge people sight unseen?

HR: Look, he's a grown man. If you want to know how he saw the light, go ask him yourself.

C1: Fine, I'll believe it when I see it. (*exits*)

HR: Fine.

(*not looking up, waving him off, eager to get back to work. C2 knocks on door. HR slams down pencil, looks up*)

Am I being punished? Come in!

C2: Hey there... got a minute?

HR: (*exasperated*) Sure! Why not? The more the merrier!

Lent 4 – Human Resources by Julie Martin Burruss

I Sam 16:1-13

John 9: 1-41

C2: About Sam...

HR: Yes?

C2: Yeah. I'm a little worried about him.

HR: About Sam? Why?

C2: I just think he's under a lot of stress... Plus this assistant thing.

HR: I know, I know. You're not the first one I've heard from.

C2: Well, did you talk to him about it?

HR: About what?

C2: About his lack of judgment.

HR: (*miffed*) Look. I've told all of you already, and no one is listening! Why do I have to keep saying it? I trust him. Period. Why do you doubt him?

C2: Well... uh...

HR: Why is your judgment on this issue better than his?

C2: I didn't say that...

HR: Why do you doubt that he can make this call?

C2: It's just that...

HR: Do you need some sort of proof?

C2: No, not necessarily....

HR: You know what? (*as though reconsidering*) I *do* want you to go talk to Sam. Ask him what he was thinking when he made this decision. (*C2 eagerly agrees*). And then... I want you to ask him to be your mentor, because I think his vision is clearer than all yours. And apparently we could all learn from him. OK?

Lent 4 – Human Resources by Julie Martin Burruss

I Sam 16:1-13

John 9: 1-41

C2: (a little stunned) Ok, Ok! I believe you!

(C2 exits... Sam re-enters, carrying a file folder)

Sam: Sorry to bother you, but here's that paperwork. Everything OK?

HR: Yeah, it's fine. But I am curious... with this hire, what prompted you to take this "sight unseen approach" this time?

Sam: I just decided that it's not always about appearances. And this time, by not seeing, I could see more clearly than ever. (he exits)

HR: (following him out) If we could all be so blind...

Lent 5 – Team Building by Julie Martin Burruss

Ezekiel 37:1-14

John 11:1-45

Characters:

Worker 1 – model employee

Worker 2 - conformist

Worker 3 - malcontent

Boss – professional, a little unapproachable, but kind

Three workers enter, apathetic, skeptical, a little hopeless. They slump in chairs.

W2: Why are we here again?

W1: We're having (*using air quotes*) a team building workshop.

W3: Ugh. I hate these things...

W2: Me too.

W3: Like it's going to do any good...

W2: They never do.

W3: I bet we play that game where we have to fall backward into each others' arms.

W2: Ooooh, the Trust Fall!

W3: Whatever...

W1: I wish we would've had some warning.

W3: What do you mean?

W1: Obviously, if they've resorted to pulling us out of work for a team building workshop, then our performance must have been sliding a bit.

W3: Was it that noticeable?

W1: *I* could tell.

W2: Yeah, me too.

Lent 5 – Team Building by Julie Martin Burruss

Ezekiel 37:1-14

John 11:1-45

W1: I just wish they would've done something before it got this bad. These team building exercises are a total waste of time. I could be getting some real work done.

W2: Maybe it's not a waste. It *has* been a little dreary lately.

W3: Dreary? I feel like I'm *dead* here. Sometimes when I walk through the doors in the morning I can feel the life being sucked right out of me.

W2: It's like the office is staffed with a bunch of zombies.

W3: Skeleton crew. Literally.

W1: I'm just saying if they would've said something earlier, maybe we wouldn't be subject to "team building."

W3: How come management never notices us until something goes wrong?

W1: O.K., I have a confession. I sent an e-mail to the manager awhile ago...

W2: You did? About what?

W1: I just sent a note that said it seemed like morale was low and that it was affecting all of us. Actually, I think I used the word "disease."

W2: You said we were diseased?

W1: More like... we were all hit with some sort of virus, and we were all slogging around with no energy, and had she noticed, and did she have any ideas for what we could do about it.

W2: How did she answer?

W1: She said she'd deal with it eventually.

W3: There you go, it's the manager's fault. She had fair notice.

(pause, then realization sets in)

W3: They're going to fire us, aren't they.

Lent 5 – Team Building by Julie Martin Burruss

Ezekiel 37:1-14

John 11:1-45

W2: Oh great, we're all dead!

W1: But... I sent a memo!

W3: A memo that said we were sick. Now we're dead!

W2: Yeah, nice going!

W1: Come on... I was being proactive! I asked for help! They have to respect my effort!

W3: You know what she's going to do? She's going to make an example of us. Of what happens when you let a bad attitude just fester and boil...

W1: That's disgusting.

W3: (*very animated*) ...and it gets all infected, and it starts to smell.

W2: We stink all right.

W1: I wonder what they'll tell the rest of the company.

W3: I know what they'll say. They'll leave us in this room, and then send out an e-mail telling everyone to "Come and See!"

W1: (*looking aside*) Hey, I think she's coming.

W3: All right, let's just get it over with. Whatever happens, it's been a pleasure.

W2: (*pause, then emotionally*) I love you guys!

(*they all look at him, curiously...*)

(*boss enters, everyone straightens up, looks attentive*)

Boss: Good afternoon everyone.

All: (*ad-libbing...*) Afternoon, etc...

Lent 5 – Team Building by Julie Martin Burruss

Ezekiel 37:1-14

John 11:1-45

Boss: You know, I walked past the break room to get here... it looks like you've drawn quite a crowd. There was a lot of speculation going on.

W3: I believe it.

Boss: So I hear that you aren't feeling very lively these days.

W1: I think that's accurate.

Boss: Well, let's do something about that.

W3: *(aside)* Here it comes...

Boss: I'm not sure how morale got this bad, but I predict you'll regain your spirit. Are you ready? Stand up.

(surprised, they slowly stand, looking at each other)

Boss: Okay now. Take a big deep breath in... and hold it. *(they inhale and hold)* And now exhale. *(They exhale.)*

One more time. Breathe in.... *(they inhale and hold).*

Boss: *(firmly)* Now look at me. *(they turn toward her, cheeks puffed out)* I hired each one of you. I know you. And when you need help, ask me. And I'll act. Ok?

(they all nod, faces turning red)

Boss: Okay then.

(she turns to leave, the others look at each other, red faced, wondering...)

Boss: *(turning back)* Oh yeah... you can exhale.

(communal huge Exhale!)

Boss: You'll come back to life again soon. Now get back to work.

(they all exit, workers relieved)